THE

CATHOLIC RADICAL

"...to foster a society based on creed instead of greed..." Peter Maurin

October/November 2009 **Price: For whatever it's worth**

Contagious Love

Interview with conscientious objector Joshua Stieber

Editor's Note: Raised an evangelical Christian, Joshua Stieber, 21, joined the US Army in July 2006 and was in Iraq with the first division infantry until April 2009 when the military granted him conscientious objector status. A month later, Joshua began a walking and biking tour of the US, visiting charitable communities. Reflections on his journey are posted on www.contagiouslove experiment.word press.com. *He spoke with* The Catholic Radical *on July 5th. The following is an excerpted version of that interview:*

CR: What prompted you to enlist in the military?

J: I wanted to enlist because I thought I was defending my country and liberating an oppressed people, and that it was kind of my duty, my responsibility based on my religious and national beliefs.

CR: When you were sent off to Iraq, what were you expecting?

J: ... I would be helping to free people and helping to prevent more attacks on my country. I thought it would be very clear-cut, that there were the good guys and the bad guys and it would be like kind of removing a cancer. You just take out the people who hate you and leave the rest.

CR: Where were you assigned in Iraq?

J: I was in the industrial area of Baghdad.

CR: When you got there, did your experience match your expectation?

J: No. When we got there we moved into this factory in the middle of the industrial part of town. At first, when the locals found out we were going to move in, they blew up the building...so then we got the building next door. As we were moving in, the whole area came out and protested peacefully, waving signs and banners saying they didn't want us there, and that it was their country and that we weren't welcome.... That was not something I was expecting. We ignored their peaceful protests. We clamped down, and they tried telling us, more violently, that they didn't want us around. We would escalate what we were doing, and they would escalate what they were doing, and it got to the point where it seemed like we were trying to out-terrorize the terrorists, and that really made me question why we were there in the first place....

"War's End" by Howard Brodie

CR: You said your unit did house raids in Iraq. Did you have to kill anybody?

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Anarchism

by Brenna Cussen

The word "anarchist" is deliberately and repeatedly used in order to awaken our readers to the necessity of combatting the "all-encroaching state," as our Bishops have termed it, and to shock serious students into looking into the possibility of another society, an order made up of associations, guilds, unions, communes, parishes—voluntary associations of men [sic], on regional vs. national lines, where there is a possibility of liberty and responsibility for all. Dorothy Day

Anarchism is a political philosophy that judges State authority to be unnecessary for, and often detrimental to, the organization of society. Anarchists advocate for a society organized by voluntary cooperation and free association of individuals and groups. Though the term *anarchy*—in part defined as "lawlessness"—has long been around, it was not until 1840 that Pierre-Joseph Proudhon used the word *anarchism* to describe a political theory or attitude. Contrary to the popular conception that anarchism leads to chaos (a conception reinforced by the stereotype of anarchists as window smashers or bomb throwers), Proudhon insisted that "anarchy is order." Since anarchists encourage decisions to be made and implemented by the people those decisions affect, they believe anarchism in practice is a more efficient form of organization than a bureaucratic state.

Such a vision closely resembles the Catholic Social Principle of "subsidiarity," developed by Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical *Rerum Novarum* and by Pope Pius XI in *Quadragesimo Ano*. Subsidiarity suggests that matters ought to be handled by the smallest or most local grouping possible, rather than by larger groups or collectivities like the State, which tend to usurp authority

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Anarchism

(Continued from Page 1)

and destroy individual liberty and initiative.

Christian anarchists believe that, since the God of love and mercy is our ultimate authority, we cannot support the pretensions of nations-states, which use violence and coercion to establish, maintain, and expand their borders and enforce their laws. While we are commanded as Christians to love our enemies, and forgive 70 times seven times, the State kills our enemies and punishes lawbreakers. By pledging allegiance to, voting for representatives of, or paying taxes to a violent state, we violate God's design. Christian anarchists instead support the creation of smaller, decentralized communities and cooperatives based on personal needs. They hope that such federations will eventually render the State superfluous.

Much of Scripture and the Tradition of the Church supports Christian anarchist thought. In the first Book of Samuel, the people beg the prophet to ask God to send them a king, "to be like other nations," despite Samuel's warning that a king would enslave them and take their sons, daughters, and animals as his own. When God grants the request of His people, He says to Samuel, "**It is not you they reject, they are rejecting me as their king**" (see: 1 Samuel 8:4-22). And despite the expectations of many that the Messiah would be an earthly ruler, Isaiah prophesies a servant who suffers for His people (see: Isaiah 53).

Despite St. Paul's exhortation that Christians "**must all obey the governing authorities**," the Gospels overwhelmingly promote the anarchistic value of resistance to power and domination. In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus is offered the chance to dictate a utopia of peace and prosperity. The devil says, "**I will give you all this power and glory of these kingdoms, for it has been committed to me and I give it to anyone I choose. Worship me, then, and it shall all be yours**" (Luke 4:4-6). Jesus rejected this temptation as tantamount to a rejection of the Father, Who gives us all free will. Jesus instead chose to show us a love that compels, rather than forces.

And it did compel. After Jesus' Death and Resurrection, small Christian communities formed and spread, even at the risk of persecution and death. Political leaders, kings, and emperors were threatened by such communities because they offered an alternative to the State—a way of life that shared what they had in common and took personal responsibility for the poor, rather than handing them over to state welfare. Christianity in practice rendered political leaders unnecessary.

Peter Maurin, co-founder of the Catholic Worker, saw obvious links between early Christian communities and the villages of his native France, which functioned mostly through cooperation. He was familiar, too, with the writings of Russian anarchist and zoologist Peter Kropotkin, who believed human beings had evolved through "mutual aid" rather than "survival of the fittest," and who looked to the craft guilds and free cities of the Middle Ages as a model on which to base a society run by federated associations rather than state governments. Maurins' original vision for the Catholic Worker stressed a movement of lay Catholics back to the land, forming communities in rural areas where they could grow their own food and engage in craft work. He saw a transformation of society coming about through his three point program: farming communes, houses of hospitality, and "roundtable" discussions for workers, the poor, and scholars alike.

Although Peter considered himself an anarchist, he did not like to use the term when speaking publicly about the political philosophy of the Catholic Worker, because he felt that it frightened and alienated people who did not understand it. Instead, Peter called himself a "personalist," a word that serves as a reminder of the Christian belief in a personal and loving God. Personalism as a philosophy is based on the idea that society and all of its institutions should be ordered toward the material and spiritual good of every person (unlike communism or capitalism, whose proponents are willing to sacrifice individuals for the ideas of "the State" or "the Market"). Personalists work to build communities that take personal responsibility for the needs of each one of their members.

The Catholic Worker today, made up of about 185 communities, continues to try to put Peter's vision into practice, attempting to build "a new society within the shell of the old," until there is no longer a need for the old. Ω

Just as it is gravely wrong to take from individuals what they can accomplish by their own initiative and industry and give it to the community, so also it is an injustice and at the same time a grave evil and disturbance of the right order to assign to a greater or higher association what a lesser and subordinate organization can do.

Pius XI in *Quadragesimo Ano*

King Leopold's Ghost

reviewed by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

King Leopold's Ghost; A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa, by Adam Hochschild, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston/New York, 1998.

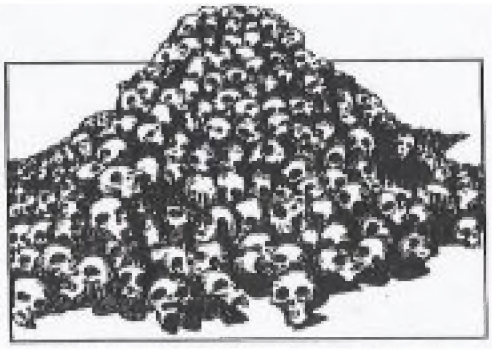
The reader might well ask, "Why review a 12-year-old book?" The answer lies in my own ignorance. Although I consider myself a good student of history, when I found Adam Hochschild's book, **King Leopold's Ghost**, on my brother-in-law's shelf, I was astonished. Between 1877 and 1908, ten million people, half the population of Congo was killed by exploitation or disease. Hochschild tells the story of Belgian King Leopold II's fantastically cruel domination of Congo and the courage and persistence of early human rights activists who tried to stop him. The book is a page-turner with potent lessons for us today.

The story begins with a constitutional monarch of a small country who yearns to personally own a colony he can exploit to fund a lavish life-style. Under the cynical guise of opposition to the slave trade, Leopold "buys" Congo in fraudulent schemes no more legitimate than the one in which the Dutch bought Manhattan. The king subsequently sends heavily armed station chiefs with orders to use forced labor to collect ivory and rubber. To compel obedience, natives were tortured, maimed, or killed. Often, women and children were held hostage to force compliance.

A Catholic missionary described a typical station chief named Léon Fiévez: "All the blacks saw this man as the Devil of the Equator.... From all the bodies killed in the field, you had to cut off the hands. He wanted to see the number of hands cut off by each soldier, who had to bring them in baskets.... A village which refused to provide rubber was swept clean. ...I saw Fiévez's soldier Molili... take a big net, put ten arrested natives in it, attach big stones to the net, and make it tumble into the river.... Soldiers made young men kill or rape their own mothers and sisters."

An English explorer reported in 1899 that he crossed a 3,000-square-mile tract in northeast Congo which was "depopulated and devastated." He said, "Every village has been burnt to the ground, and as I fled the country I saw skeletons, skeletons everywhere; and such postures—what tales of horror they told!"

By these tyrannical means, with almost no expenses, save transport and arms, Leopold was able to reap the largest profits in colonial history. "The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than



ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look at it too much," writes Joseph Conrad in his masterpiece **Heart of Darkness**, a book inspired by the author's 1890 trip up the Congo River. Indeed, many of Conrad's most shocking literary references are taken from events he witnessed. An actual station chief's compound, for example, was encircled by a fence bedecked with human skulls like the compound of Conrad's famous villain Kurtz. And yet, Hochschild bemoans the fact that most academics treat **Heart of Darkness** as a metaphor for the human condition rather than a slice of history.

Nonetheless, in 1890 George Washington Williams, an African-American journalist and historian, began documenting and exposing what was happening in Congo. His work was expanded and carried on by William Sheppard, an African-American minister, by Edmund Dene Morel, a British businessman, and by Roger Casement, an Irish diplomat. Their stories are as encouraging as Leopold's is distressing. Although often overlooked at the time because he was black, Williams' early use of the term "crimes against humanity" was nearly 100 years ahead of its time in the struggle for human rights. Sheppard risked his freedom and life to tell Congo's story. Casement and Morel are no less amazing. Together, they organized the first international mass movement for human rights with chapters in the United States, Britain, and over a dozen other countries. The first head of The American Congo Reform Association was Dr. G. Stanley Hall, President of Clark University, right here in Worcester, Massachusetts. Notables like Mark Twain and Arthur Conan Doyle joined the campaign. Twain even wrote a satirical book called **King Leopold's Soliloquy.**

The human rights campaign was only moderately successful, but, as Hochschild points out, it paved the way for groups like Human Rights Watch today and perhaps, more importantly, it preserved a record of what happened in Congo, no easy feat considering all the disinformation Leopold promoted. Many Catholics, like Archbishop James Gibbons, the founder of Catholic University in Washington, DC, were duped into believing that tales of mass killing in Congo were Protestant propaganda. The fact that most people today have never heard of the killing demonstrates the success of Leopold's efforts to confuse history, a confusion modern Belgians are in no hurry to clarify. But Belgium is not alone in its desire to cover up crimes against humanity. Sudan is trying to do so with Darfur. Turkey wants to paper over the Armenian genocide. The US government makes no effort to retell its crimes against Native Americans. Unfortunately, even when atrocities are reported, the public's historical memory is painfully short. As John Hersey, the author of **Hiroshima,** said, "the important 'flashes' and 'bulletins' are already forgotten by the time yesterday morning's newspaper is used to line the trash can."

And so, I urge everyone to take Adam Hochschild's 12-year-old book off their library shelves and read it. You will be interested, informed, shocked, inspired, and challenged, responses any author can be proud to produce. Ω

Interview

(Continued from Page 1)

J: Our day-to-day responsibility was to go around to different houses and just dig through people's homes and possessions, looking for any kind of evidence or weapons or stuff like that. We could detain people without warning. Like I said before, the locals first let us know nonviolently, and then tried to let us know violently, that we weren't welcome there.... I guess the nature of this war is that there is no really direct contact with the enemy. [You hear] a sniper shot and a sniper will disappear, a roadside bomb and the person is long gone by the time you have realized what happened. And so this colonel said—to teach the people a lesson and to hopefully intimidate them into working for us— everyone is considered a target when something like that happens.... There were a couple of times when I had to either fire into an open field and hope that I didn't hit anybody, or flat out refuse to shoot because there was nowhere I could shoot where I felt like I wasn't injuring anybody.... It seemed doing stuff like that was going to create more enemies, because you have all these innocent people standing around, and if somebody in their family were to die from an incident...you have that many more people with pretty good justification to not like you being there.

CR: Do you think you hit anybody?

J: I don't think so, and I hope not.

CR: As part of the application for conscientious objector status, you are asked to identify your "crystallization of conscience," that moment when you decided to renounce war. When did that happen for you?

J: ...There were a lot of moments and times that kind of made me question or lose a lot of the assumptions that I had about what was going on.... I went through a period of time when I just didn't know how to make sense of reality and thought a lot of it was meaningless...that everything was morally ambiguous and nothing we did, one way or the other, really mattered.

Then I started to evaluate things and realized that a lot of what I was doing, I was doing for the wrong reasons. I thought I was living out my religion, but when I really sat down and thought about it, I realized I was trying to live more for other people's expectations and trying to justify myself to other people... It wasn't really about a communication with God; it was just how other people viewed me. So, from there, I started trying to do little things, to really live for that communication with God, even doing things as simple as taking the trash out when nobody was looking, to make sure that I was doing it for the right reasons and not so somebody would think higher of me...

CR: Taking out the trash without anybody knowing is a small act; how did you get to the more costly act of leaving the military?

J: ...I had always wanted a lot of things to be true—things I would say that I believed, different things that I knew Jesus had said about loving your enemies and returning evil with good, turning the other cheek, through the example of His life, showing that love and that communion with God was more powerful than the worse kind of suffering and death. I knew He said that and I knew He went through that. The attitude a lot of people around me had, and the attitude that I had, was that those things sound nice but don't have any practical value. I guess I tried the other way for a long time and realized that I had run out of excuses to not live out what I said I believed...

My original plan was to take the money that I had gotten in Iraq and walk into military pay headquarters, after having been Absent Without Leave for about a month (enough to be considered officially AWOL). I was going to turn in the money and say I didn't want to keep it, that it was morally wrong how I got it, and that I couldn't do it anymore, and if I had to serve the rest of my enlistment in jail, then that is where I needed to be. That was my plan. A couple of days before I was going to do that, I told my parents and they kind of flipped out.... They started researching other options and told me about conscientious objection, which I had never heard of before.

...So after a lot of thought and debating, and, yeah, self reflection, I realized that *any* war was wrong for me and that I couldn't honestly say that I was living like Jesus is if I was preparing for war and preparing to kill people. What I had to do was the opposite of that, not just wait for the worst possible scenario to happen but to live everyday showing love and not fear. As many problems as I had with the [military] system, if they did provide this opportunity [applying for CO status] to at least hear people out, I would let them hear me out and say what I had to say and kind of go from there....

CR: How long was the process?

J: Ten months.

CR: And you were with your unit the whole time?

J: Yes.

CR: Was that difficult?

J: ...things were kind of quiet for a couple of months, and we weren't really doing a whole lot of training and it was more paper work and stuff like that. But when it came time to

THE WORKS OF MERCY FEED THE HUNGRY • CLOTHE THE NAKED • GIVE DRINK TO THE THIRSTY • VISIT THE IMPRISONED • CARE FOR THE SICK • BURY THE DEAD

THE WORKS OF WAR DESTROY CROPS & LAND SEIZE FOOD SUPPLIES • DESTROY HOMES • SCATTER FAMILIES • CONTAMINATE WATER • IMPRISON DISSENTERS • INFLICT WOUNDS • KILL THE LIVING

Rita Corbin

go back out to the ranges and practice shooting at targets, I said I wasn't going to train to kill any more.

My first sergeant, who was in charge of about 120 people, didn't like that idea very much and kind of flipped out on me and said that I was a terrorist and a traitor. Fortunately, I had read a book a day or two before on how important breathing is. I figured I would put that into practice and took a few breaths as he was yelling at me and I tried to understand why he thought fighting and killing was an important thing. I also realized that part of his job was making sure that people do their work, and he probably thought I was just trying to get out of work. I waited until both of us had calmed down and talked with a different leader of mine. I told him these were things I sincerely believed and I wasn't just trying to get out of work. I told him I don't want to train to kill but there were some things I would do because obviously I was going to be there a long time. So I was able to switch jobs within the company and do stuff like paper work and driving vehicles around. Eventually, the guy who had yelled at me and called me all that stuff became very encouraging and supportive of me. I left on good terms with just about everybody.

CR: Now what are you doing?

J: The original idea that I had of taking the money and throwing it back in the government's face and just trying to wash my hands of the whole situation... I realized that was kind of a negative answer.... If I was saying "no" to war and violence, I had to figure out what I was saying "yes" to. So instead of giving the money back to the government, I researched a bunch of different organizations.... A lot of my religious experience growing up had connected religious living with violence and militarism. I wanted to find a way of living closer to what Jesus talked about—things as simple as giving to the poor, and feeding the hungry, and visiting the prisoner and the orphan—things that, a lot of times, are easily ignored in religion. I just picked out these 11 different organizations that focused on the idea that every decision and every day is important and what we do on a day-to-day basis defines the reality around us. [I wanted to meet groups who] instead of living in these communities of fear where people are just afraid that everybody is out to get them, or if they don't take up arms the world is going to fall apart, have faith in something higher, have faith in the power of love and are willing to live that out like Jesus lived that out... I found these charities that seem to embody that idea and started walking from one charity to the next, talking with as many people as I can and learning from everybody I can....and just trying to show that love and nonviolence are possible ways of living.

CR: Is the army money funding this trip?

J: Yeah. A little bit of it is going to fund the trip and the majority is going to these organizations that I am visiting.

CR: And are you meeting people who aren't living in fear?

J: Definitely. It's been really cool. A lot of people say, "Oh you are going to be staying with strangers..... What if you end up running into a serial killer?" Just being able to meet people for whom that [suspicion] is not their initial response, people who want to help and who want to grow and their first thought isn't about self-defense or self-preservation, which leads to a lot of paranoid ideas. I'm seeing the part of humanity that has faith in one another and has faith that even if something bad were to happen that it's not worth living in constant fear, that love is stronger than fear....

CR: After the walk and the ride, do you know what comes next?

J: I'm hoping I will figure that out along the way. Ω

Ta'anit Tzedek תענית צדק

Jewish Fast for Gaza

by Rabbi Brian Walt

The JEWISH FAST FOR GAZA is an *ad hoc* group of Rabbis, Jews, Christians, and Muslim clergy, people of all faiths, and people of conscience who have committed to undertake a monthly daytime fast in support of the following goals:

- We call for a lifting of the blockade that prevents the entry of civilian goods and services into Gaza;
- We call for the delivery of humanitarian and developmental aid to Gaza's people;
- We call upon Israel, the US, and the international community to engage in negotiations without pre-conditions with all relevant Palestinian parties—including Hamas—in order to end the blockade;
- We call upon the US government to vigorously engage both Israelis and Palestinians toward a just and peaceful settlement of the conflict.

Do not stand idly by when your neighbor's blood is being spilled.
Leviticus 19:16

Since Hamas' electoral victory in January 2006, Israel has subjected the Gaza Strip to an increasingly intolerable blockade that restricts Gaza's ability to import food, fuel, and other essential materials, and to export finished products.... We condemn Hamas' deliberate targeting of Israeli civilians. We also condemn the use of much greater violence by the Israeli government, causing many more deaths of Palestinian civilians.... In the Jewish tradition, a communal fast is held in times of crises both as an expression of mourning and as a call to repentance.... This fast takes place on the third Thursday of the month from sunrise to sunset. Almost 700 people of conscience across the US and in several other countries have committed themselves to the fast. To join this community visit www.fastforgaza.net. Ω

God's Image

by Graham Greene

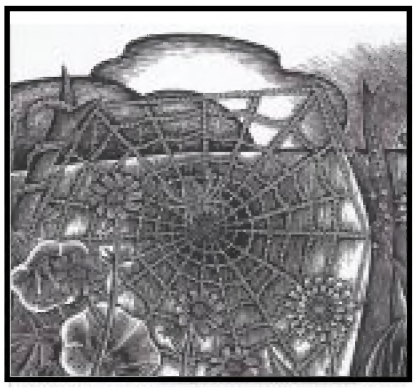
Editor's Note: The following excerpt is from Graham Greene's novel **The Power and the Glory**. *The main character is the last priest in a Mexican state after the country's anticlerical revolution. Although he suspects that a malarial, "yellow-toothed peasant" intends to turn him in to the government for a reward, the priest puts his sickly betrayer on a donkey and guides them to town, where if the priest is captured, he will be executed.*

Sometimes, instructing children in the old days, he had been asked by some black lozenge-eyed Indian child, "What is God like?" and he would always answer facilely with references to the father and the mother, or perhaps more ambitiously he would include brother and sister and try to give some idea of all loves and relationships combined in an immense and yet personal passion.... But at the center of his own faith there always stood the convincing mystery—that we were made in God's image. God was the parent, but He was also the policeman, the criminal, the priest, the maniac, and the judge. Something resembling God dangled from the gibbet or went into odd attitudes before the bullets in a prison yard or contorted itself like a camel in the attitudes of sex. He would sit in the confessional and hear the complicated dirty ingenuities which God's image had thought out, and God's image shook now, up and down on the mule's back, with the yellow teeth sticking out over the lower lip, and God's image did its despairing act of rebellion with Maria in the hut among the rats. He said, "Do you feel better now? Not so cold, eh? Or so hot?" and pressed his hand with a kind of driven tenderness upon the shoulders of God's image. Ω

Faith Shared

by Joan Huber

Hand roughened with washing, canning, making do
Guides tiny fat fingers four years hers
Points to spider web glistening between tomato plants
There in dawn quiet in the garden, speaks
"Could any of us make
something like that?"



Beth Krommes

Useful Gifts

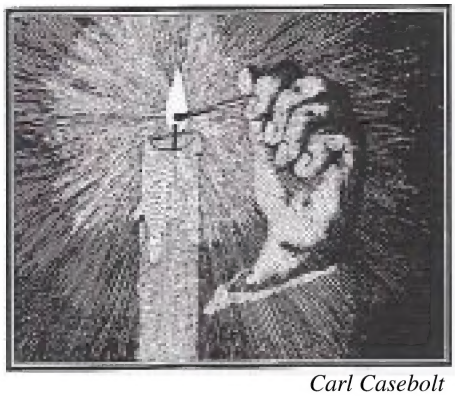
Editor's Note: Donations of any items below are very helpful. Stamps can be mailed to us. Everything else can be left at our house, since our front door is never locked.

- postage stamps
- erasable ink pens
- rolls of quarters for laundry
- recycled envelopes (all sizes)
- large City of Worcester trash bags
- cloth laundry bags
- umbrellas
- gloves and mittens
- winter hats
- environmental laundry detergent
- environmental dish soap
- toilet paper
- Murphy's Oil Soap
- shampoo and bar soap
- olive and canola oil
- sugar and honey
- oranges or local fruit in season
- canned tomato products (all kinds)
- organic white and wheat flour
- ketchup, mustard, salad dressings
- plain yogurt
- brown rice, white basmati rice
- orange juice
- butter and magarine
- cheddar and parmesan cheese
- dried and canned beans
- salted peanuts, cashews, or almonds
- cucumbers, broccoli, red peppers, carrots, garlic, onions, potatoes, and fair-trade bananas.

Hand-dipped and Hand-poured Candles

After melting and remaking the remnants of previous years' paschal candles from Catholic parishes, The Saints Francis & Thérèse Catholic Worker is pleased to offer recycled, handcrafted candles. Comprised of 51% beeswax, these beautiful candles make excellent gifts for birthdays, anniversaries, and Christmas. They can also be engraved to order for weddings and other special occasions. Eight-inch tapers and larger poured candles, plain or decorated with wild flowers, are available. Engraved candles come in 9.5 by 2 and 6 by 3 inch sizes.

Since all of our candles are hand-dipped or hand-poured, labors of love and time, we encourage anyone interested in them to contact us soon at theresecw2@gmail.com or 508 753-3588 to arrange a time to come by and see them, pick some up, or have a set mailed. Although similar candles retail at high prices, we hope to make them available for a donation to support the cost of their manufacture and our labor. Ω



Carl Casebolt

Letters

Kathleen Edwards

Editor's Note: The following is an exerpt from a letter we received from a prisoner in the American deep south. It is included here anonymously to provide a glimpse of the injustice facing the record numbers of people behind bars in the United States.

Dear Scott,
...I just never seem to learn. I was punched in the side of my head by my cell-mate. He lost it, and, seeing the surprise in his face after he did it and knowing he wasn't going to continue his assault, I was going to drop it. But then I saw that I was bleeding bad on my clothes. I looked in the mirror and knew I needed to go to medical. I locked up my property and went to medical and told them I was hit by my cell-mate. At the time I just wanted to get out of my cell. But they locked us both up, and both of us are still in administrative confinement into our fourth week now. On Monday, they will need to get an extension from a state classification officer to continue holding us. Monday is transfer day too.

I had one phone call and reached my family and told them what happened. They told me in a letter that they called someone concerning my safety.

Now, I know I should've said I'd fallen and hurt myself, like I knew, but I wasn't thinking. I should not have called my family either. Now, the dorm seargent let his orderly take my valuables from my property and I assume they'll probably transfer me since this is the best way for them to remove the situation and liability. This [prison] is one of the few with air conditioning.... This hasn't been a good year for me....

Dear Scott and Claire,
I really appreciated the new *Radical,* especially the abortion/war and banking articles. We are Consistent Life rather than Pro Life, which seems to mean only anti-abortion. We also stay under the IRS radar by being low income with no home ownership or investments (only in our children), but thank God for Medicare and Social Security! Take care,

Mary Ann Phillips
Southborough, Massachusetts

Dear all at SS. Francis & Thérèse CW,
My wife and I enjoy reading *The Catholic Radical* regularly, to be nourished in spirit and challenged in mind by the articles.

The recent "Mason Street Musings" impressed upon me how important an interpersonal touch can be to help a struggling person get back on their feet. Charity and justice need to work together; they do in the CW philosophy as practical action and moral witness complement each other.

Brian Stiltner
Hamden, Connecticut

Dear Claire and Scott,
Great *Catholic Radical* issue.

Claire, isn't it weird that abortion is legal and yet right now we have some guy in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania being charged with "homicide of a fetus"?

And I like that "glossy pamphlets" because an ex-Marine among my students shared a military handout that makes one's rifle more important than spouse or parents or, if memory serves, than God.

Father's homily today centered on the Mustard Seed and Yeast parables as Our Lord's metaphors for eternity. ...He asked, "What do you like? Beaches? There'll be countless ones. Mountains? One new one every day forever." (And there I was thinking that it'd be like finally getting your Ph.D.)

That's no consolation for the deaths of unborn babies or the "collateral damage" of civilians killed in war, or even the poor young kids who see military service as a way up and out. But thanks to you and others like you, we can believe in their eternity and have some hope for this world.

Joan Huber
Allison Park, Pennsylvania

Catholic Worker Calendar

October 15 & November 19— Jewish Fast for Gaza Prayer/Vigil: Please join us in a Jewish prayer for an end to the Israeli siege on Gaza. 9-10 A.M. In front of the Worcester City Hall on Main Street.

October 2 & November 6— Vigil Against War and Abortion: Please join us for a monthly vigil starting outside the US military recruiting station on Park Avenue and ending across from the Planned Parenthood building (under construction) on Pleasant Street in Worcester. Noon to 1 P.M.

Julie Lonneman

October 5 & 19 , November 9— Mass: Join us in prayer and song at 7 P.M. 52 Mason Street. Refreshments to follow.

November 4 — The Four-fold Path to Wellness: Please come hear Beth Ingham, of Noonday Catholic Worker Farm in Winchendon, Masachusetts, speak about dietary health. At 52 Mason Street. 7 P.M.

November 11—Franz Jägerstätter: ***A Man of Conscience***: Please come see a new 50-minute documentary on the extraordinary witness of the Austrian Catholic martyred for refusing to serve in Hitler's army. 7 P.M. 52 Mason Street.

For more information on any events,
please call: 508 753-3588.

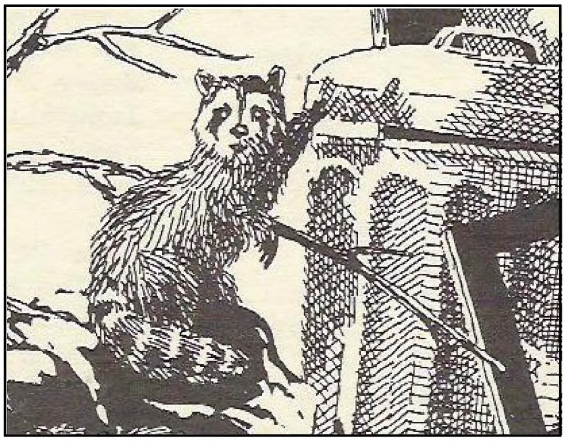
Mason Street Musings

We get quite a few calls for hospitality, sometimes eight or nine a day. Claire told one of those callers that we'd have a bed for him on Friday. Unfortunately, come Friday morning, she told another man we'd have a bed for him that afternoon. The two men arrived almost simultaneously and we only had one bed. Despite Stanley Vishnewski's adage, "There's always room for one more at the Catholic Worker so long as you aren't superstitious and don't mind sleeping 13 to a bed," I suggested that we try to raise the money to put the last man to arrive in a hotel for the weekend. But Claire was undaunted. She apologized to the second fellow for her memory lapse and borrowed an air mattress from Jo and Marc. For the next week, we had six guests, two workers, and my daughter Grace on the second floor, eight in beds and one on the air mattress in the kitchen. It was a tribute to everyone who had to share a single bathroom that there were no complaints.

One of those new men, Junior, woke Dave at 3:30 A.M. to get him onto the upstairs back porch so he could witness an ongoing fight in our garden below between a raccoon and a skunk. "That's the first time I've ever seen such a thing," Dave told me at 7. I replied, "I didn't see the duel, but I certainly smelled it." One wouldn't think that the second largest city in New England would be home to much wildlife, but it is.

A few weeks ago, a moose wandered onto our block. The only other time I've seen a moose was in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. Everyone in the neighborhood came out to take pictures before the moose was sedated by park ranger types who took her to the woods of northern Worcester County.

When we first moved to Mason Street, I saw a great big possum on the front porch and had no idea what it was. I called animal control to tell them that some kind of country animal needed to be rescued. After



I described it, they laughed at me and said that just about every porch in the city was sheltering a family of possums.

Hawks are other unlikely creatures that seem to be proliferating around here. I don't remember ever seeing a hawk as a child, but I often look up in the sky now and see one circling. They are beautiful birds.

On the wooded road up to the Worcester Airport, I sometimes see wild turkeys. Until I saw them lifting off the ground into the branches of apple trees, I had no idea turkeys could fly.

I think of these animals because Father Peter Joyce, a wonderful priest at a parish where we offer our bread, said something about animals in his homily yesterday. He told his congregation that in the early 1970s the Vatican repealed the rule against eating meat on Fridays because most Catholics had lost sight of the primary reason behind the sacrifice (to recall Christ's suffering on the Cross). And then Father Peter went on to describe an older Jewish tradition of abstention from meat on Fridays which I had never heard of. Apparently, Jews did not eat meat then because that was the day God created humanity and all other land creatures. Jews wanted to show respect for animals created on the same day as we were. Although, I'm no fundamentalist who takes Genesis literally, I am impressed with the Jewish notion that humans and animals are regarded by God as spiritually linked.

I'm also impressed with a number of rabbis who've organized a monthly Jewish fast and prayer for an end to the Israeli siege of the Gaza Strip. Brenna, Claire, Dave, Ken, and I feel privileged to join their efforts.

We feel even more blessed to finally have an energy-efficient heating system, just in time for the cold weather. For all of those who donated toward its purchase as well as those who gave us food, envelopes, and stamps, we give thanks. We rely on your support and hope to be worthy of your generosity. Blessed Autumn! Ω **Scott**

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